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To all who desire
SATISFACTION
IN THE
Case of Oathes,

SHEWING
How far under the *LAW* it was lawful
To *SWEAR*;
And how that in any case under the *GOSPEL*
it is Forbidden.

By *William Holgate.*

Micah 6. 8. *The Lord hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

Acts 24. 14. *But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call Heresie, so Worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets.*

Prov. 20. 28. *Mercy and Truth preserve the King, and his Throne is upholden by Mercy.*

Isa. 1. 10. *We to them that decree Unrighteous Decrees, and write grievousness, by a Law that they have prescribed, &c.*

L O N D O N :

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To all who desire Satisfaction in the,

Cafe of Oathes.

WHilst *Israel* stood in the Covenant with God, under the Dispensation of the Law given forth by *Moses* his Servant, they were in some cases allowed or commanded to Swear by the Lord their God, for performing some special thing to the Lord, thereby binding their Souls by an Oath, or for Confirmation of a matter, whereby Strife was to end; but they were not to swear by any thing else, neither after the manner of the *Egyptians* or *Heathen*: And if at any time they swore, it was to be done in Judgment, Mercy and Truth; for if they that were under that Dispensation or Covenant, swore to do good, or to do evil unadvisedly or rashly, or if any heard the Voice of any such Swearers, they, and those that swore to do good or to do evil, were to bear their Iniquity & be shut out of the Congregation of the Lords People for that Trespass, *Lev. 5. 1, 4* till the Priest had offered up a Sacrifice of Attonement for them, and they having knowledge thereof, confessed they had sinned in so Swearing.

Nevertheless, this *Moses*, who gave forth the Law unto *Israel*, said unto them, *A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise unto you, of your Brethren, like unto me, HIM shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you; And it shall come to pass, that every Soul which shall not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the People, Acts 3. 22, 23.*

And this Prophet was *Christ*, the end of the Law, who said, *It is finished, John 19. 30.* which the holy Voice, *Mat. 17. 5.* said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.* And he commanded *Israel*, *Mat. 5. 37* *Not to Swear at all, but that their Yea should be Yea, and their Nay, Nay.* And the

the same Jesus Christ said, He was greater than Solomon, *Mat. 12. 41, 42.* and was David's Lord, who was and is to be heard and obey'd in all things; yea, whosoever shall break one of the least of his Commandments, and teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven, *Matth. 15. 19.*

And his Disciple James, in Confirmation of this Testimony, writing to the twelve Tribes, among several Godly Salutations, Admonitions and Counsels, said, *James 5. 12.* *But above all things my Brethren, SWEAR NOT, neither by Heaven, neither by Earth, neither by ANY OTHER OATH:* As if he should have said, "Though you may fall into Temptations, yet I would have you avoid *SWEARING*, for there is no good comes by Swearing, because it expressly opposeth Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour his Command; and opposeth the very end of his Coming, which was to bring men unto Perfection and Unity with himself, as in the beginning, that so having a regard (through his Power) to their Words and Promises, they may become conformable to him in all things, rendering unto *Caesar* the Things that are *Caesar's*, and unto *God* the things that are *God's*, who keeping themselves in the Love of God, look for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal Life, knowing that in the World they shall have Trouble, but in Christ Jesus Peace, which no man can take from them.

But if any shall say, *It was Swearing in ordinary Communication, that Christ forbade.*

Such may as well say, that the *better Hope* did no more than the Law of *Moses* did, which forbade rash and ordinary Communication-Oaths, as is mentioned, *Lev. 5. 1. 4.* and confirmed by the Prophets of the Lord, *Jer. 5. 7.* *How shall I garden thee for this? Thy Children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods; and Jer. 23. 10.* *For because of Swearing the Land mourneth; Hos. 4. 2.* *By Swearing, and Lying, and Killing, and Stealing, and committing Adultery, they break forth, and Blood toucheth Blood; therefore, shall the Land Mourn: Zach. 5. 3.* *Then said he unto me, This is the Curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole Earth; for every one that*
Stealeth

Stealth shall be cut off, as on this side; and every one that Sweareth shall be cut off, as on that side, according to it. Which Texts sufficiently prove, that under the Dispensation of the Law of *Moses*, all ordinary Communication-Oathes were forbidden; so it is hoped upon a serious and weighty Consideration of these Texts, *Christians*, or such as would be esteemed Christians, will not oppose the plain Command of Christ Jesus our Saviour, or have so low esteem of his Doctrine, who is the alone Saviour, as to alledge or say, That he did no more than *Moses* did under the Law, lest it be said, That *Christians* have changed their glory for that which doth not profit, and so bring a Reproach upon Christianity; for as it was the glory of the *Jews* under the Law not to *Forswear*, neither *Swear vainly*, so it is and always was the glory and perfection of true Christians not to *Swear at all*, as may be proved by numerous Testimonies of the Antient Christians, whose Answer to such as persecuted them, and required them to Swear, was, *They were Christians, and could not deny Christ nor his Doctrine.* A few Testimonies are here recited for the Satisfaction of the honest hearted Enquirer in this Matter.

1. And first, *Polycarpus*, who was *John's* Disciple (who wrote the *Revelations*) and Bishop in *Smirna*, about Anno 162. denied all Oathes, and said (when examined before the Proconsul of *Smirna*) "That he was a Christian, and was ready to shew
"forth the Doctrine of Christianity, if the Governour desired
"the same. Who for refusing to Swear was committed to the
Flames, being eighty six years of Age; *Euseb. lib. 4. ch. 15.*

2. *Basilides*, a Souldier, and of Authority in the *Roman* host, Anno Chr. 205. refused to swear in a matter concerning his Fellow-Souldier, affirming, *He was a Christian.*

3. *Ambrose*, Bishop of *Milan*, upon *Psal. 110.* "Do not
"imitate him in Swearing, whom you cannot imitate in fol-
"lowing; therefore Swear not; for the Gospel-Truth doth
"not receive an Oath, sith every faithful Speech is for an Oath;
"and what is more, is from the evil One.

4. *Jerom*, upon *Mat. 5. 34.* *James 5. 12.* saith, "The great
"Evangelist

"Evangelist admits not of an Oath, since every true Saying is
"equal thereunto, &c.

5. *Chrysostom* (about Anno 399.) blameth them greatly that
brought forth a Book to swear upon; saying, "It is a sin to
"Swear well, and not lawful to swear in a just or unjust thing;
"With much more against Swearing.

6. *Theophilus*, an Antient Father of the Church, saith,
"Learn hence, that under the Law it was not evil for one to
"Swear, but since the coming of Christ, it is Evil, as is Cir-
"cumcision, and in sum, what-ever is Jewish.

7. *Ambrose*, on *Mat. 5.* "Therefore the Lord, - who came to
"teach the little Ones, to inspire Novices, to confirm the
"Perfect, saith in the Gospel, *Ye must not Swear at all*; he spoke
"not only to the Apostles, but to the Multitude; for he would
"not have thee to Swear, lest thou shouldst Forswear.

8. *Cyprian*, (about 249.) a famous Father in his day, and
faithful Martyr, *de Mortalis.* "It is unlawful for any man to
"compel another to take an Oath.

9. *Hilary* (about 305.) on *Mat. 5.* a Father very famous in
the days of *Constantine*; "The Law set a Penalty for *Perjury*,
"but Faith doth remove the Custom of an Oath, making the
"business of our Life to be determin'd in Truth, and laying
"aside the affecting to deceive, that the business of deceiving
"might be apparent between [*It is*] and [*It is Not*] and what
"is more, is all of Evil.

10. *Gregory Nyssenus*, Brother to *Basil*, his Works are famous,
said, "He who by *Moses* established the beginning of the Law,
"by himself fulfilled all the Law and the Prophets; who taking
"away Anger, abolished Killing also, and together with Lust
"took away Adultery; he also casts out of mens Lives accursed
"*Perjuries*, whilst by the Prohibition of an Oath, he hath put in
"his, sixth, as it were, to security, commanding not to Swear
"at all.

11. *Isidorus Pelusiota* (who as is said, that on Earth he lived
the Life of an Angel) writes, *Epist. 155. lib. 1.* "If thou art of
"our Flock, and art ordered under a good Shepherd, deny the
"Nature of wild Beasts, and obey his Voice that forbiddeth to
"Swear

"Swear at all, &c. Moreover, not to Swear, is not to require
 "an Oath of another; If a man speaks Truth usually, he will
 "always speak Truth, without an Oath; but if he be a Liar,
 "he will Lye, though he Swear, &c.

12. *Augustine*, on *Mat. 5* (about *Anno 430.*) "It was the
 "Righteousness of the Pharisees not to forswear; this he con-
 "firmeth, who forbiddeth to swear, which belongs to the
 "Righteousness of the Kingdom of Heaven; for as he that doth
 "not speak cannot speak a Lye, so he cannot Forswear which doth
 "not Swear. That an Oath is not among good things, but
 "among evil things, and used for the Infirmary of others, which
 "is evil; from which we pray, that we may be delivered.

13. *Chromatius*, a Bishop of *Aquileia*, on *Mat. 5.* "But I say
 "unto you, Swear not at all. The Law (saith he) given by
 "Moses received a growth, proficiency or perfection by the
 "Grace of the Doctrine of the Gospel. In the Law it was
 "commanded, not to Forswear, but in the Gospel not to Swear;
 "which very thing heretofore the holy Ghost did premeditate,
 "that *Solomon* should command or teach, saying, *Let not thy*
Mouth use to Swear.

14. *Cassiodorus*, on *Psal. 94.* about the year 500. "Hence it
 "is that men are forbidden to Swear, because by their own
 "Power they cannot perform their Promises.

15. *Isidorus Hispalensis*, who lived in *St. Gregory's* time, about
Anno 540. "Many are slow to believe, which are moved at the
 "belief of the Word; but they do grievously offend, who compel
 "them to Swear that speak to them.

16. *Beda*, about *Anno 700.* an English man, and stiled vene-
 "rable; *Before all things, my Brethren, Swear not*, saith, Be-
 "cause he entirely desires to draw out the deadly Poyson of the
 "Tongue in his Hearers; he forbad to detract or slander any
 "man, or to judge his Neighbour, who forbad to grieve in Ad-
 "versities, which are open sins; That he might take away the
 "Custom of Swearing, said, *I restrain you from the fault of*
Swearing, &c.

17. *Theophilact*, Arch-Bishop of the *Bulgarins*, about *Anno 900.*
 very famous, on *Mat. 5.* saith, "To Swear, or adjoin more to

“*Yea or Nay*, is of the Devil. Moreover, (saith he) if thou shouldst say, That the Law of *Moses* was Evil, because it commanded to Swear; learn, that then it was not Evil; but after Christ, it is Evil, as also to be circumcised, and in brief, whatsoever is Jewish.

18. *Alphonfus de Avendano*, out of *Cajetan's* Comment of *Mat. 5.* “The Lord perfected the command of not Forswearing, by taking away the occasion, because without an Oath it is impossible to incur Perjury; for an Oath was not necessary by the first intention of Nature; for if men had continued in the Truth, they had not lyed; and because Christ came that he might bring back men to the first Innocency, an Oath is not necessary; and therefore not good, nor of God, &c.

19. *Thomas Aquinas*, *Glos. on Mat. 5. p. 22.* “The Lord had taught before, Wrong is not to be done to our Neighbour, as in forbidding Anger, with Murder, Lust, Adultery, putting away ones Wife; and now he teacheth, that we must abstain from wronging of God, when he doth not only forbid Forswearing as Evil, but also an Oath, as the occasion of Evil, whence he saith, *Hear thou again, &c.*

20. *Euthymius Zagabonus* on *Mat. 5. p. 43.* saith, “*Again, ye have heard it said to them of old time, Thou shalt not Forswear, &c. but I say unto you, SWEAR NOT AT ALL, &c.*” *Quest.* What then is to be done, if any require an Oath, yea, compel to Swear? *Ans.* Let the fear of God be more forcible than this Compulsion or Necessity, and chuse rather to suffer all things, than to transgress the Command, sith in every Precept, force and violent danger will often meet with thee. And unless thou esteemest the command of God every where more forcible, all things will depart from thee, void and unperformed.

21. *Jo. Major Hadingtoni*, on *Mat. 5.* “Not to Swear at all, that Precept was given to the Disciples (the Basis) of the first Church.

22. *Peter Charron*, Doctor of Law in *Paris*, in his Book of Wisdom, chap. 37. “An Oath, what is it, but a symptom and [shameful] Mark of Distrust, Infidelity, Ignorance, humane Infirmitie,

"firmly, both in him that requires it, and that gives it, that ordains it; alluding to Christ's words, *What is more than Tea, Tea, and Nay, Nay, is of the Devil.*

23. *Oecumenius*, a famous Greek writer, about *Anno 1070.* on *James 5. 12.* writes thus: "But some will say, *If any be forced to Swear, what must be done?* We say, the fear of God shall be stronger than the force of him that compels, seeing that God sought not a Sacrifice by Beasts, but a broken Spirit, enflamed by the fire of Love. He forbids to Swear by God, because of Perjury, by Heaven and other Oaths, that men should not bring these things into the Honour of God; for all that did Swear, did Swear by the greater.

24. *Anselmus*, Bishop of *Canterbury*, about *Anno 1090.* on *Mat. 5.* saith, "*Moses* seeing that he could not take away Swearing, takes away Perjury; but the Lord removes them more perfectly from Perjury, when he forbids them to Swear at all.

25. *Michael Sadler*, an eminent man, (called a Lord) was cruelly Tortur'd and put to Death by the Papiſts, under the Emperor of *Germany*, whose Brethren were also executed with the Sword, and his Wife and Sisters drowned for holding opinion, That men should not Swear to or before the Magistrate. About *Anno 1527.*

26. *Bible Notes*, upon *Mat. 5.* "Whatsoever you avouch, avouch it barely, and whatsoever you deny, deny it barely, without any more words.

27. *Beza* on *James 5.* That which you have to say or affirm, speak it simply; and that you have to deny, deny it simply and flatly.

28. *H. Grotius* (on *Mat. 5.*) a great and learned Man, excludes all Oathes, not only such as are used in common Conversation, but such as relate to Trade or pecuniary matters.

29. Bishop *Sanderson*, *de juram. pract. 5.* "No need to forbid by a new Commandment things that of themselves were always unlawful. So he, otherwise, We must read Christ's words thus; *Ye have heard by them of old time, Thou shalt not Forswear thy self; but shalt perform unto the Lord thine Oathes;*
"but

and I say unto you, Swear not at all, except in some cases. Which would be a wronging of Christ's words.

Now they that love Christ will keep his Commandments, that so they may have right to enter into the Joys of their Lord, where they will be preserved from the Evil of that day, which will burn as an Oven, wherein all the Proud, yea, and all that do Wickedly, or tempt God's People (by laying of Snares to catch them in) shall be as Stubble; so that neither Root nor Branch shall be left to the proud, wicked oppressing violent Men, who have filled the Earth with Violence, and made the Land, by reason of Oathes to mourn. So it will be good for all in this the day of God's Power, to consider what they are doing, and whose hands they are strengthening; for it was the chief Priests that were the chiefest Instruments, by stirring up the Rulers (*Luke 23. 13, 18.*) to murder the innocent; and so brought innocent Blood upon their Heads, and upon their Posterity: Oh! therefore let every one that fears the Lord pray for the Peace of *England*, that the hearts of them that hate Peace may be converted, and instead of seeking to cause Discord, Hatred and Heart-burnings amongst men, by encouraging Evil-doers, they may labour to preserve Peace, by doing that which begets good Will amongst men, and so be true Christians, obeying Christ Jesus, who commands to love Enemies, and to bless and not curse, that so their Righteousness may exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees of this Age, or the *Egyptians* of old, *Exod. 1.* who made *Israel* serve with Rigour, that their Lives were made bitter unto them with hard Bondage, though they neither imprisoned them, nor took their Goods or Cattel from them, for all their Cattel went out of *Egypt* with them, as is recorded, *Exod. 10. 26. chap. 12. 31, 32.*

And we see by Experience, that an Oath will not bind ill men, but is a Snare and a stumbling block to the upright hearted, who need no *fearing Asservations*, to awe them into Truth-speaking, knowing that what God dispensed with under the Law, he resolved to remove under the Gospel, and to bring things nearer to himself in Truth and Righteousness, from Adultery in the Act,

to Adultery in the Thought, from Revenge to Sufferance, from true Swearing to No Swearing at all, whereby all abuse of Oathes and Perjury comes to be removed with the Oathes themselves, by working out of mens hearts that Fraud and Falshood that brought them in, and implanting Evangelical Verity in Room thereof, which speaketh the *Truth*, the *whole Truth*, and *Nothing but the Truth* to his Neighbour, and makes a like matter of Conscience to tell a Lye, as to Forswear. And it is known to Almighty God, and we desire most heartily it may be known and believed by all, that we have no other end or inducement to this so general Refusal we are found in throughout the Nation.

Written, the 3d Moneth, }
1683. }

William Holgate.

The Gospel was preach't to Abraham before Oathes and Swearing were, and Christ in his Gospel ends Swearing.

T H E E N D.

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